

**STATE PLANNING COUNCIL
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

November 18, 2010 @ 6:30 p.m.
RI Department of Administration
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI

DRAFT MINUTES
ATTENDANCE

TAC members present:

Ms. Fran Shocket, Chair	Public Member – Jamestown
Mr. Dan Baudouin	Providence Foundation
Mr. Alan Brodd	Cumberland Public Works Director
Mr. Russ Chateaufeuf	RI Dept. of Environmental Management
Mr. Mark Carruolo	City of Warwick
Ms. Marilyn Cohen	RI Chapter, American Planning Association
Mr. Kevin Dillon	RI Airport Corporation
Mr. Robert Murray	Public Member – Smithfield
Ms. Linda Painter	City of Providence
Mr. Barry Schiller	RI Sierra Club
Mr. Robert Shawver	RI Department of Transportation
Mr. Henry Sherlock	Construction Industries of RI
Ms. Jane Sherman	Public Member – Providence
Mr. Everett Stuart	RI Association of Railroad Passengers
Mr. Mark Therrien	RIPTA
Mr. Michael Walker	RI Economic Development Corporation
Mr. Michael Wood	Town of Burrillville

TAC members absent:

Ms. Sue Barker	Greenways Alliance
Mr. Michael Cassidy	Public member -- Pawtucket
Dr. Judith Drew	Governor's Commission on Disabilities
Mr. Paul Romano	Public Member – Bristol
Mr. Jim Soctomah	Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Preservation
Dr. Robert Vanderslice	RI Department of Health

Others in attendance:

Ms. Diane Badorek	RI Department of Transportation
Ms. Meredith Pickering	Senate Fiscal Office
Ms. Ann Clarke	RI Airport Corporation
Ms. Eugenia Marks	RI Audubon Society/ Coalition for Transportation Choices
Ms. Amy Thibeault	RI Department of Transportation

Statewide Planning Staff Present:

Mr. Kevin Flynn	Associate Director
Mr. Jared Rhodes	Chief
Ms. Ronnie Sirota	Principal Planner

AGENDA ITEMS

1. **Call to Order**

Ms. Shocket called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. **Approval of October 28, 2010 Meeting Minutes**

Upon motion of Mr. Murray to approve and seconded by Mr. Carruolo the October 28 2010 minutes were accepted unanimously.

3. **Public Comment on Agenda Items**

Ms. Eugenia Marks of the Audubon Society and the Coalition for Transportation Choices commented that there are opportunities for greenhouse gas reductions by supporting bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the TIP and RIPTA's strategic plan.

4. **Transportation Improvement Program FY 09 – 12 – Major Amendment #9**

- Staff Presentation (RIDOT and RIPTA):

Mr. Shawver gave an overview of the changes since the last meeting. He reviewed the TAC's comments since the last meeting and returned with a final draft of the proposed TIP Amendment. The detailed Amendment including the changes was in the TAC mailing packet. The Amendment replaced the TIP budget numbers with the actual dollars spent in FY 2009 and 2010 for all the TIP programs except for transit. Because permits were not yet obtained for some of the bridges, some of the bridges listed in the chart were substituted for others listed originally. Two major events affected the implementation of projects originally programmed in the TIP for this time period: the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and the great flood in Rhode Island in March of 2010.

Mr. Therrien reviewed the RIPTA proposal, which includes the award of two competitive grants and reprogramming of funds to allow RIPTA to support Small Urban Transit Operations. The changes include the award of \$1.5 million in funding for solar heating at RIPTA's Elmwood Avenue facilities; investing in Kennedy Plaza for construction of passenger amenities, improved signage and design of new traffic circulation patterns. The third project is the use of funds for transit operations.

There were no comments by the TAC on the proposed amendment. A public hearing is anticipated to be held in January 2011.

5. **State Guide Plan Element 640: State Airport System Plan**

- Recommendation to authorize a public hearing:

Mr. Kevin Dillon of the RI Airport Corporation moved that:

The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) table Agenda Item #5, State Guide Plan Element 640: State Airport System Plan to the next TAC meeting.

Mr. Dillon explained that there is a legal issue that was brought to the Airport Corporation's attention that has to be resolved. Mr. Murray seconded the motion, which the TAC passed unanimously.

6. **A Vision for the Future of Transit in Rhode Island: RIPTA's DRAFT Five Year Strategic Plan**

- Presentation by RIPTA:

Mr. Therrien's presented "*A Vision for the Future of Transit in Rhode Island: RIPTA's Draft Five Year Strategic Plan*". The plan recognizes a growing awareness of the economic and environmental benefits transit brings to Rhode Island. RIPTA is seeking input on the Plan details, which describes how a vastly improved statewide transit system can advance state and local goals for land use, economic development, environmental sustainability, and create more livable communities in Rhode Island. TAC members received a draft of the plan in the TAC mailing this month.

Mr. Therrien explained how this will be RIPTA's first strategic plan. Challenges will include: increased ridership despite fewer resources; demand for new modes of transportation; changing demographics which result in the need for more accessible transit; more senior citizens staying in their homes instead of going into nursing homes. In this Plan, RIPTA identifies its new role as Rhode Island's Mobility Manager. RIPTA has leveraged federal funds. Transit has a role in supporting economic development, smart growth, and livability. The Plan includes a renewed focus on customer service. In the past, the vision was mostly to be safe and reliable. Mr. Therrien explained that RIPTA needs to be bolder. RIPTA's new vision is to "Imagine a future in which a wide range of multi-modal, convenient, and attractive transportation choices help promote economic growth, and support thriving, livable communities throughout Rhode Island."

Mr. Therrien explained the five strategic goals listed in the Plan:

- Develop a multi-modal, regional and accessible transit system.
- Expand RI's transportation network to support and promote economic growth.
- Make transit convenient, attractive and easy to use.
- Recognize transit's ability to support livable communities and a green economy.
- Identify a funding strategy for the sustainable growth of our transit system.

Mr. Therrien's presentation included details and new ideas for RIPTA's future goals. These included feeder service to the new Warwick commuter rail station and the anticipated Wickford commuter rail station in order to establish regional connections. It also includes better coordination with human service agencies and the improvement of para-transit. Ideas include new programs to support all commuters regardless of mode. Examples include car sharing, bike sharing, and the streetcar project. To keep the status quo for RIPTA, approximately \$10 million in additional funds are needed. Mr. Therrien added that RIPTA will now have an official lobbyist at the State House.

Mr. Baudouin commented that the RI Senate will be appointing a new Study Commission on Sustainable Transportation Funding to study potential new revenue streams for transportation. He asked that a letter be sent from the TAC to Senate President, Senator Paiva Weed supporting this Commission and requesting her to appoint members to this Study Commission.

Mr. Baudouin moved that:

The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) send a letter to the Senate President, Senator Paiva Weed in support of the new Study Commission on Sustainable Transportation Funding that was established last year and to encourage her to make the appointments to the committee.

Mr. Brodd seconded the motion. Discussion included Mr. Schiller stating that many times there are study commissions; the real work is to get recommendations passed and implemented.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Schiller praised RIPTA as well as the many good bus drivers. He commented that ridership peaked at over 25 million and is now listed as 18 million. While there are various reasons for the ridership counts such as the inflation and lower gas prices, RIPTA does not have a strong marketing department. This should be part of the strategic plan to help rebuild ridership. Personal security, i.e. crime, is an important concern of passengers. Snow removal at bus stops is a problem that has not been solved. The one state fare system is not competitive for a short trip. There used to be a short zone fare. Mr. Schiller also felt that the Plan should do more to include passenger input. There should be a passenger advisory committee. He believes that RIPTA management needs to do more to reach out to bus drivers for their input. He is also concerned with RIPTA's consideration of rerouting buses around Kennedy Plaza however, they have not consulted with passengers on this. A rerouting of buses could push passengers away from security and the restrooms in Kennedy Plaza. Passengers weren't notified of a recent meeting on a proposed fare increase (except for information on the website). Bus drivers should be involved in planning routes.

Mr. Therrien responded that the service review committee includes six bus drivers who were appointed by the union. Mr. Schiller said the culture has to be built on this involvement of passengers and bus drivers. Mr. Brodd applauds the effort to reach out to areas beyond Providence such as Blackstone Valley.

7. Proposed 2011 Meeting Schedule

Ms. Shocket introduced the proposed 2011 meeting schedule for review by the TAC. Mr. Murray moved to accept the schedule. Ms. Cohen seconded the motion, which the TAC adopted unanimously. The schedule is as follows:

January 27
February 24
March 24
April 28
May 26
June 23
July 28
August 25
September 22
October 27
November 17

8. Election of Officers

Mr. Rhodes said that with the passing of Dr. Quigley who was Vice Chair of the TAC, the TAC is now without a Vice Chair. He reviewed the rules and regulations and determined that the State Planning Council appoints both the chair and vice chair. Mr. Rhodes would like a recommendation to bring to the State Planning Council.

Ms. Cohen moved to nominate Mr. Robert Murray for the position of Vice Chair of the TAC. Mr. Brodd seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

9. Staff Report

Mr. Rhodes stated that in addition to Ms. Karen Scott's promotion to Assistant Chief of Statewide Planning, Ms. Linsey Cameron has been hired to the position of Supervising Planner of the Transportation Section of Statewide Planning. He is looking forward to introducing Ms. Cameron to the TAC at the January meeting.

10. Additional Public Comment

Ms. Eugenia Marks commented on the RIPTA fare system. She would like a reversal to the zone fares.

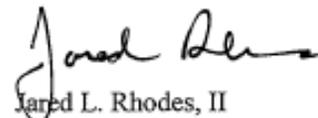
11. Other Business

There was no other business and Ms. Shocket wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

12. Adjourn

Upon motion of Mr. Murray and Mr. Brodd to adjourn, the TAC adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,


Jared L. Rhodes, II
Secretary